

## **Bush River Community Council**

### **December 19, 2011 Meeting Minutes**

The December 2011 meeting of the Bush River Community Council (BRCC) was called to order by the Chairman, John Paff, at 6:32 p.m. in the Anita C. Light Estuary Center large meeting room, Otter Point Road, Abingdon, MD, on December 19, 2011. In attendance were Harford County Councilman Guthrie, Captain Christopher Swain, Harford County Sheriff's Office, Mr. Pete Gutwald, Harford County Department of Planning and Zoning, 21 members of the community and Bush River Community Council Board members: Chairman John Paff, Vice Chair Larry Carmichael, Harry Webster, Randy Conlan, Glenn Dudderar, Kathleen Leary and Secretary Mary Starks. Board members JoWanda Lucas and Carolyn Shea were absent.

The draft Minutes for the October and November meetings were approved and can be viewed at [www.harfordcountymd.gov](http://www.harfordcountymd.gov) under Community Councils then Bush River Community Agenda and Minutes.

Chairman Paff opened the meeting by welcoming everyone and thanking them for coming.

Captain Swain was still unable to provide the crime report due to problems with implementing the new automated system, but he reported that robberies were down by 33% burglaries by 6 % and auto theft 26%. In our community there was a shed burglary on Rte 7 and construction materials were stolen from the Dixie Construction company. He recommended that we utilize the web site [www.crimereports.com](http://www.crimereports.com) and input our neighborhood to keep abreast of current information. Bel Air and Joppatown have problems with vehicle thefts; our area is relatively safe from this type of crime. The new potential owners of the Perrywood Gardens Apartments in Perryman have a good record of improving quality of life in their enterprises. A question was raised about whether to call the Sheriff's office or AMTRAK security or Maryland State Police when prowlers are seen in residential areas which back to the B&O tracks in Abingdon. It's best to call the Sheriff and the MSP, they will assist as quickly as possible. There were concerns raised about response time when the 911 calls are made. While he didn't have an average response time, Captain Swain estimated an emergency call for Sheriff assistance would take 4-8 minutes in our community since patrols are not far away in any direction.

Mr. Gutwald presented information regarding the Master Plan and the Land Use Plan for the Bush River Community. There are not many changes recommended, but concerns were raised about identifying as R4, high intensity development at the intersection of Route 7 (Old Philadelphia Road) and Rte 40; Environmental protection, well-head protection from hazardous material (Aberdeen has control of development within the town limits and the County can only advise. Other concerns of the council are passive recreation of the Bush Declaration area, walking trail connection Forest Greens Park and Perryman Park, and increased water access possibly at the BG&E property in Perryman. Discussion continued about changes to zoning regulations and the Harford Land Trust Public Review process. Concerns about impact of traffic at Abingdon Road and Route 7 intersection, 24/924 by pass confusion, Rte 22 and I95, Rte 543 and I 95 transportation loads, schools and churches, water and sewage system and treatment facilities, and health and protection of the Bush River and ultimately the Chesapeake Bay. The Sod Run treatment facility is currently more than sufficient to handle the waste for the county and it has been upgraded to provide more than required EPA standard removal of phosphorus and nitrogen. However, there is a concern for the quality of a treatment facility on Aberdeen Proving Ground which uses 1960 technology and this issue will be raised at our February

meeting when APG personnel will present information on the APG Restoration Program.

Several concerns regarding the porn shops operating out of book stores along Rte 40 were raised again and, unfortunately for residential property values, the first amendment rights protect such activities. Questions were raised as to the number of arrests made at those locations for lewd and under age behavior for those businesses and Captain Swain will provide that information at the January meeting

The final draft Master Land Use plan will be presented to the County Council January 3 and completion is expected by February 7, 2012.

There were several status reports under Old Business:

The issue of railroad ties floating up on the shores of Bush River after work on the railroad bridge has been completed is now being researched by Councilwoman Listanti since State Delegate Glen Glassman has not responded to our request for assistance.

Councilwoman Lisanti and Chairman Paff took on responsibility for resolving the issue regarding Harford County Parks and Recreation Department soccer field responsibility and scheduling of a field owned by Rite Aid Distribution Center in Perryman. This issue has been explained and resolved. Rite Aid had offered use of the field to the employee of Harford County Parks and Recs who is currently in charge of the Churchville area which is why he has been scheduling its use. From now on, Perryman community will have first choice at schedules for this field followed by other Harford County communities at no cost except port-a-pot rental and only then will it be offered to private soccer clubs for a fee.

Councilman Guthrie described work he is finishing up on updating the livability code for Harford County. His bill proposes a small registration fee (\$20 biannually) to all those who rent living quarters in the county. Property owners are resisting this even though if no complaints are made against owners during the 2 year period, the fee would be waived for them. This bill will provide tenant assistance by the county government should the quality and safety standards deteriorate below standards set by the bill and no improvements or restorations are made by the owner of the property being rented. The number of property owners who are renting has increased because it is so hard to sell real estate and therefore they choose to move and rent their previous homes/condominiums. The bill will be introduced to the County Council at the January 20 meeting.

New Business:

By early scheduling and publicizing of important topics and speakers for our meetings, the council hopes to encourage increased citizen attendance. Scheduled topics include:

Monday, January 16, 2012 - a presentation/Q&A by the Harford County Department of Water and Sewer

February 20, 2012 – a presentation/Q&A by civilian employees responsible for implementing the Aberdeen Proving Ground Restoration Program.

Future plans include State reps and/or Anita C. Leight reps to discuss the environmental health of the Bush River.

With no further questions or issues raised, the Chairman thanked everyone for coming and adjourned the meeting at 8: 22 pm.

Submitted by:

Mary Starks

Secretary

Bush River Community Council